

Agriculture loses advocate and friend

Wyoming rancher Olin Sims passed away unexpectedly last week at his ranch in McFadden. Sims was president of the National Association of Conservation Districts and past president of the Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts.

"He was a good friend to me, he was a friend to many and his enthusiasm, charisma and talent as a leader for our conservation districts was indisputable. This man will be sorely missed," said Ralph Brokaw, President of the Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts and good friend and neighbor to Sims.

Sims was born and raised in Wyoming. His family operates the Sims Cattle Company in the Rock Creek Valley. Sims first became involved with conservation districts in 1986 when he became the rural supervisor for the Medicine Bow Conservation District. He served as president of the Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts from 1998 to 2004. He was also chairman of the Western Coalition of Conservation Districts from 2001 to 2002, and served on the National Association of Conservation Districts Board beginning in 2004. He became President of the National Association of Conservation Districts in 2007, a position he was elected to through 2009.

The Sims family has received many honors for their outstanding stewardship and conservation efforts. These awards include the Excellence in Grazing Management Award, the National Endowment for Soil and Water Conservation, and the Land Manager of the Year. In 2004, they received the Wyoming Stock Growers Environmental Stewardship Award and were named the Wyoming Game and Fish Landowners of the Year. In 2005, they received the Environmental Stewardship Award from the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, acknowledging their tremendous efforts to protect and conserve our nation's rural resources.

Sims was inducted into the Wyoming Agriculture Hall of Fame in 2006. His many activities included being a member of the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation, the Carbon County Farm Bureau, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, the Wyoming Stock Grower's Association, the Wyoming Water Association, the Albany County Stock Grower's Association, and the Rock Creek Valley Volunteer Fire Department.

"Olin was a leader in the conservation community, both in Wyoming and nationally. This tragic accident came at a time when he had recently been named president of the National Association of Conservation Districts. Olin's commitment to the land and to the work of these groups was clear, and his voice was influential in the conservation community," Governor Dave Freudenthal said upon hearing of Sims' passing.

Sims was a family man who was proud of his Wyoming roots. He is survived by his wife Tammie and son Tyler.

Services will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday at the Rock River School.

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